

# ARTICLE ALERT

**American Center Colombo**  
44 Galle Road, Colombo 3  
Tel. 249-8194  
E-mail: amcentersl@state.gov



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**June 2009**

## DEMOCRACY & GLOBAL ISSUES

### 1. **PROTECTING THE PROTECTORS: NGO ACTION AND THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT.**

Benjamin, Dave

(International Journal on World Peace, vol. 26, no. 1, March 2009, pp. 31-50)

According to Benjamin, assistant professor of international political economy at the University of Bridgeport in Connecticut, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) are facing increasing threats as internal conflict in states rises. Benjamin says that as NGOs and INGOs play a bigger role in shaping international humanitarian policy, they become more vulnerable. Because NGOs have no official ties to any government, Benjamin says they cannot rely on protection by the UN or under international law. Benjamin also notes that NGOs can fall prey to internal conflicts, and often fall into the habit of promoting reforms based on Western economic models and can overlook local, older social structures and norms. He notes that NGOs and INGOs walk a fine line between humanitarian intervention and cultural chauvinism; they are playing an increasingly important role in shaping the framework for countries with internal conflicts. Despite the pitfalls, Benjamin says NGOs and INGOs have great potential for "preserving the peace, protecting the vulnerable, and securing humanity's common future," and for this reason, they should be afforded the same protections as states and individuals.

### 2. **THE SOCIAL BRAIN.** Chen, Ingfei

(Smithsonian, Vol. 40, No. 3, June 2009, pp. 38-43)

A spindle-shaped nerve cell found only in certain regions of the brain may be the key to what separates humans from most of the animal kingdom. Known as the von Economo neuron, it may also strengthen the link between humans and a select group of other social animals, including elephants, great apes, certain whales and bottle-nosed dolphins. By comparing the occurrence of this cell in humans and other species that possess it, neuroscientist John Allman of the California Institute of Technology hopes to learn more about social behavior and its evolution among species. The von Economo cell is larger than most brain cells, and Allman thinks its first evolutionary assignment was to move impulses around big-brained creatures. In time, the scientist theorizes the demands of social interaction required the cell to take on the job of managing those activities. If he's right, and the brains of humans and animals sharing the von Economo cells followed the same evolutionary path, that means these creatures have the same specialized brain wiring for empathy and social interaction as humans.

[www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/The-Social-Brain.html](http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/The-Social-Brain.html)

3. **ROXANA SABERI AND HOW JOURNALISM WORKS IN IRAN.** Moaveni, Azadeh  
(Time, June 1, 2009)

Western media sees Iran in black and white, but there are many nuances in understanding how Iran really works, the author says. A case in point is the Iranian-American journalist Roxana Saberi, who was arrested in Iran on charges of espionage, but then freed. Moaveni, who has reported in Iran since 1999, acknowledges that she has had to deal with an Iranian government "minder" who monitors all her activities -- but she has come to accept that her minder represents "a troubled government composed of both pragmatic and hard-line factions." The hardliners, she says, view all journalists as essentially spies; but the fact that the government still allows so many foreign journalists to visit and operate out of Iran is a sign of pragmatism. Moaveni warns that having valid press credentials issued by the Iranian government is essential -- something Saberi ignored. "Reporting on the powerful, whether in the world of finance, the White House, or the Islamic Republic of Iran, is always a fraught enterprise," Moaveni says. Even in Washington, D.C., she says, there is "a complex power game involved in cultivating close access to the knowledgeable and influential. Of course a journalist who flouts the rules in Washington will risk access rather than imprisonment, but that's just one more benefit of living in a society with the luxury of nuance."

<http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1902080,00.html>

4. **PHOSPHORUS FAMINE: THE THREAT TO OUR FOOD SUPPLY.** Vaccari, David A.  
(Scientific American, June 2009)

Phosphorus, an underappreciated resource and a key component of fertilizers, is still decades from running out. But the author warns that we must act now to conserve it, or future agriculture could collapse. Mining phosphorus for fertilizer is consuming the mineral faster than geologic cycles can replenish it. The U.S. may run out of its accessible domestic sources in a few decades, and few other countries have substantial reserves, which could also be depleted in about a century. Excess phosphorus in waterways helps feed algal blooms, which starve fish of oxygen, creating "dead zones." Reducing soil erosion and recycling phosphorus from farm and human waste could help make food production sustainable and prevent algal blooms.

<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=phosphorus-a-looming-crisis>

## ECONOMIC SECURITY

5. **RESHAPING THE WORLD ORDER: HOW WASHINGTON SHOULD REFORM INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.** Brooks, Stephen; Wohlforth, William  
(Foreign Affairs, vol. 88, no. 2, March-April 2009, pp. 49-63)

The authors, academics at Dartmouth College, propose a strategic approach rather than a recipe for reform and present the case for Washington leading the reform process. They believe that the existing architecture is out of sync with today's world of rising powers and new challenges; as interdependence among countries intensifies and the list of global problems that the U.S. can't resolve on its own grows, the benefits of international institutions will increase. Despite the fact that the Bush administration has squandered much goodwill in the past eight years, the U.S. has the means and the motive to spearhead the foundation of a new institutional order. It should follow a strategy that highlights the benefits of the institutional revisions, links the proposed order to the current one, and uses the United States' position of influence to persuade other governments to sign on to reform.

6. **DRUNKEN NATION: RUSSIA'S DEPOPULATION BOMB.** Eberstadt, Nicholas  
(World Affairs, Vol. 171, no. 4, Spring 2009, pp. 51-62)

The relentless depopulation of Russia amounts to an ethnic self-cleansing, says the author, a scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. The process threatens to reshape life and society, diminish the prospects for economic development, and affect country's potential influence on the international stage. This trend, which began in 1992, constitutes the longest period of population decline in modern Russian history. With the collapse of Soviet rule, Russia has seen a drastic change in childbearing patterns and living arrangements described by Eberstadt as "withering away" of the family itself that has produced low levels of fertility. In addition, high premature mortality rates are of a scale akin to results of a devastating war, he says. The high death rates are a result of serious epidemics of HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, as well as with an upsurge of cardiovascular disease and fatal injuries from alcohol abuse. As Russian authorities have mainly ignored the nation's human resources crisis in their strategic plans, the country's economic and democratic future is in jeopardy.

<http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/2009%20-%20Spring/full-Eberstadt.html>

7. **FORGING A SECOND AMERICAN CENTURY.** Engler, John  
(Forbes, May 28, 2009)

In this series of stories called "Made in America," Engler, former three-term Michigan governor and current president of the National Association of Manufacturers, argues that American manufacturing will survive. The United States, he notes, remains the world's largest manufacturing nation, accounting for more than 19.5 percent of global manufacturing output. Although 1.5 million manufacturing jobs have been lost, more than 12 million remain and manufacturing represent 11.6 percent of the U.S. gross domestic product. The bad news is that higher taxes, energy and regulatory costs place U.S. manufacturers at a disadvantage compared to their foreign competitors. The good news is that competition hones better manufacturing processes, and, as manufacturing become more automated, lower labor costs in places like China and India are less important in the competitive picture.

<http://www.forbes.com/2009/05/27/john-engler-manufacturing-business-america.html>

8. **ARE SHOPPERS FED UP WITH THE RECESSION?** Gregory, Sean  
(Time, June 1, 2009)

"Recession fatigue" may have set in, and consumers are out shopping again, according to this report; recent surveys done by WSL Strategic Retail, a consulting firm, show that fewer consumers are reporting that they are cutting purchases. WSL's CEO Wendy Liebmann reports that people seem to have cut back as much as they can. They're "tired of watching every little penny and are ready to break out a little," she said. But Liebmann stresses that her data doesn't predict a recovery. Unemployment is still high, and job anxiety remains a powerful brake on consumer spending. Currently available online at <http://www.time.com/time/business/article/0,8599,1901902,00.html> [CD; JAM]

9. **IT'S OFFICIAL - THE ERA OF CHEAP OIL IS OVER.** Klare, Michael  
(The Nation, posted June 11, 2009)

Every summer, the Energy Information Administration (EIA) of the U.S. Department of Energy issues its International Energy Outlook, a data-packed assessment of the global energy situation. This year's report contained a statement of great

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significance: the EIA predicts a sharp drop in future global oil production. Klare notes that the EIA, which in past years has scoffed at the notion of impending global petroleum shortages, is now finally coming around to the conclusion that many experts have been warning about for years – that the era of cheap and plentiful oil is drawing to a close. While the EIA predicts that production of unconventional fuels will increase to fill the shortfall, Klare and others are doubtful that they will bridge the gap, given the large investments required and the tremendous adverse environmental impact. The EIA's report also highlights the insatiable demand for energy in Asia, and the fact that China will before long overtake the U.S. as the world's largest energy consumer, at which point it will be in a position to influence global energy policy and markets.

<http://www.thenation.com/doc/20090629/klare>

## INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

10. **FORGETTING PYONGYANG.** Bandow, Doug  
(National Interest, Web Exclusive, May 27, 2009)

The author, a senior fellow at the Cato Institute, asserts that North Korea's recent nuclear test "has little practical importance." Noting that North Korea has been a nuclear state for some time, Bandow suggests that the tests may be linked to internal politics, since Kim Jong-il is not well and his succession has hardly been assured. Our main objective should be to avoid, not trigger, a conflict with the North – to wait out its eventual demise. President Obama and Secretary Clinton overstated the danger from the North's tests, which "changed nothing and threatened no one." The U.S. should encourage China to use its influence to promote internal regime change. Barring that, the administration should express an interest in forging a more positive relationship with the North and should be open to both formal and informal bilateral discussions – but only if Pyongyang reciprocates. Further North Korean provocations should be met with "bored contempt rather than excited concern;" the U.S. should also step back and allow Beijing, Seoul, and Tokyo to take the lead in dealing with the North, since they are more directly threatened by Pyongyang. "North Korea is a nightmare, but a far worse one for other nations than America."

<http://www.nationalinterest.org/Article.aspx?id=21524>

11. **BEYOND THE WATER'S EDGE: THE ROLE OF EX-PRESIDENTS IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY.**  
Douville, Alex J.  
(Georgetown Journal of International Affairs, vol. 10, no. 1, Winter/Spring 2009, pp. 57-62)

Ex-presidents are increasingly asserting a more active role in foreign policy due to the relatively young age at which they retire, longer life expectancies, and the reach of the Internet and 24-hour communications networks. The author, director of policy studies at the Center for the Study of the Presidency in Washington, D.C. says that the ongoing engagement of these men is good and may contribute to the future success of foreign policy. The reach of former presidents is broader these days because many recent officials, including Jimmy Carter, have established policy centers in their names giving them a solid platform from which to exert influence. Sitting presidents are also making use of their predecessors to handle delicate diplomatic missions and to raise funds for humanitarian disasters. "Former presidents can also circumvent the animosity that plagues traditional channels of U.S. foreign policy," Douville writes, "championing American ideals by acting as unofficial 'Goodwill Ambassadors.'" While their influence is valuable, he says, their activities should be coordinated with current administrations whenever possible.

12. **INFLUENCE WARFARE AND MODERN TERRORISM.** Forest, James J. F.  
(Georgetown Journal of International Affairs, vol. 10, no. 1, Winter/Spring 2009, pp. 81-89)

The author, Director of Terrorism Studies and associate professor in the Combating Terrorism Center at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, examines the sophisticated use of different forms of communication by al-Qaeda on the Internet. Using Web sites, blogs, videos, and other Internet tools, al-Qaeda attempts to convince their audiences that the righteousness of their cause justifies their violent attacks. A challenge for the U.S. is to develop a new information strategy that will undermine and discredit al-Qaeda's rationales for violence. The U.S. must use all available media, including the Internet, to craft and deliver messages that discredit al-Qaida's violent ideology. American efforts in strategic communication are currently scattered across many overlapping government entities and should be more centrally coordinated.

13. **CONFLUENCE OF EVIL: THE SMUGGLING-TERRORISM NEXUS.** Fosson, Adam  
(HSToday, vol. 5, no. 12, December 2008, pp. 24-29)

There is a growing connection between counterfeit consumer items, tobacco smuggling, narcotics trafficking and foreign terrorist organizations. This is because terrorism takes a large investment and these illegal operations provide sources of cash. The sustainability of these income sources is also crucial to jihadists because they perceive their jihad as a long-term fight. The merging of terrorist organizations and groups that carry out illegal activities makes them even more dangerous as each gains more skill sets and improves their capabilities. In order to stay ahead of both groups, American initiatives must evolve and expand to collect and share information both internally and abroad.

<http://www.hstoday.us/content/view/6239/92/>

14. **WINNING IN AFGHANISTAN.** Jalali, Ali A.  
(Parameters, vol. 39, no. 1, Spring 2009, pp. 5-21)

Jalali, former Interior Minister of Afghanistan and now Professor at the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies at the National Defense University, discusses the past failures and the future necessities in what is now America's primary foreign-policy priority. Jalali sees problems ahead with regard to the upcoming plans for more U.S. troop involvement, noting that "since 2001 the situation in Afghanistan has evolved from a relatively simple post-conflict setting into a complex threat environment marked by terrorism, insurgency, and the many challenges of nation-building." Jalali notes that the goals of the Afghans, the Obama Administration and the international community are often at cross-purposes. The terrorist presence means that Afghan and international forces will have to simultaneously tackle the challenges of counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, and nation-building. He writes that the focus of the administration's new Afghanistan strategy should include eliminating the ability of the insurgency to use Pakistan as a base, building support among the Afghan tribes and local communities and assisting the Afghan government in establishing the rule of law and combating corruption.

[www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/Parameters/09spring/jalali.pdf](http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/Parameters/09spring/jalali.pdf)

## U.S. SOCIETY & VALUES

15. **INTERNATIONALLY, THE BUSINESS OF EDUCATION IS BOOMING.** Fischer, Karin  
(Chronicle of Higher Education, Vol. 55, No. 38, May 29, 2009, pp. A1, A31-A32)

Despite the global economic downturn, the business of education is booming. The number of students who study outside their home countries is projected to grow from three million this year to eight million by 2025, and most U.S. colleges and universities not only lack the capacity to deal with the rising numbers but probably cannot efficiently create the needed capacity. Instead, they are turning to the rapidly-growing business sector that provides services to international educators – everything from medical evacuations for sick students to recruitment, internships and evaluation of foreign academic credentials. U.S. colleges also need help with the 1.25 million foreign-educated people who come to the U.S. each year and the many more they hope to recruit. Most of the U.S.-bound students used to be coming for study at the graduate level, but now colleges are seeking undergraduates, “who typically pay full tuition,” Fischer says. To find such students, colleges are paying companies for marketing plans, advertising materials, international recruitment tours and fairs, and similar services.

16. **BINDING THE NATION: NATIONAL SERVICE IN AMERICA.** Grigsby, Carol Armistead (Parameters, vol. 38, no. 4, Winter 2008-09, pp. 109-123)

The author feels that civilian national service could strengthen American identity and further contribute to this country by forging a new sense of community, rebuilding the connection between the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, and restoring sound civil-military relationships. A history of national service in the United States is also presented in this article. National service could be structured in a way to encourage a lifelong spirit of volunteerism for all Americans. This article is currently available on the

<http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/Parameters/08winter/grigsby.pdf>

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